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ABSTRACT

This brochure and research-and-development review describe three elementary schools in the Atlanta School System which were involved in the Right to Read project. Discussed are the assumptions on which the local program was based; the design for a six pronged approach to achievement in the three schools, including school tone, teaching style, curriculum, demonstration, inservice, and community involvement; the specific objectives and procedures of the Right to Read program which were written in the areas of student achievement in reading, school organization, teaching methods, parent aides, and materials; the testing procedure and tests used to evaluate students; and the success of the program thus far. (WR)

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Atlanta's Right-to-Read and Its Effect on E. A. Ware, Luckie Street, and A. F. Herndon Elementary Schools

Right-to-Read (R2R) is a national effort to raise the literacy rate of the American people. In 1972-73 three elementary schools in the Atlanta School System were involved in the Right-to-Read Project: E. A. Ware, Luckie Street, and A. F. Herndon. The goals and objectives of the national Right-to-Read effort demand full community cooperation and participation in local programs. As Ware Elementary School had been involved in the Educational Improvement Project since 1965, a program which also hinges on cooperative community involvement, Ware was chosen as the impact site for Right-to-Read. Success of the program which began at Ware in 1971-72 was then replicated in the two satellite schools, Herndon and Luckie. Development of the local program was based on the following assumptions:

1. That measurable intelligence can be developed or improved by stimulating environmental situations.

2. That reading is an important aspect of communication and can be developed and expanded throughout life.

3. That the establishment of reading centers for remediation will provide opportunity for diagnostic treatment, motivation, observation, and growth of each individual student.

4. That reading, a communicative skill, is closely related to listening, speaking, and writing. These four language arts are sequentially related to one another.

5. That the reader's facility in the use of language is directly related to comprehension.

6. That the improvement of reading skills will improve the achievement in the content areas.

7. That the extension of psychological, mental, social, and emotional experiences of the students will result in the development of an improved citizenry better prepared for the future.

The design for Ware's successful reading program hinged on a "six prong approach" to school achievement. The six prongs were (1) school tone, (2) teaching style, (3) curriculum, (4) demonstration, (5) inservice, and (6) community involvement.

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The specific objectives and procedures of the Atlanta Right-to-Read Program are as follows:

1. To raise the average reading level of students one month for each month of instruction.

2. To organize reading centers in each school, to offer special reading instruction to selected students in grades four through seven, and to improve the instructional skills of the faculties.

3. To involve students, staff, and parents in a learning environment that breaks "traditional" teaching methods.

4. To utilize parent-tutor aides efficiently for individualized and small-group instruction.

5. To give teachers access to a wide range of materials, and to encourage utilization of a variety of techniques.

The three R2R schools administered the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills to all pupils in the fall and spring. At each of the three schools involved with Right-to-Read in 1972-73, a group of about 60 pupils were tutored in the Right-to-Read Learning Center. At Herndon, higher-scoring pupils were tutored because Title I was providing compensatory services for the lower-scoring pupils. The tutored pupils in grades five and seven made larger numerical gains that did the nontutored pupils. However, across grades four through seven, there was no significant difference between the gains made by the tutored and the nontutored groups. At all grades the tutored pupils had higher mean pretest and posttest scores. None of the groups achieved national norms, although all grades of tutored pupils were within six months of norms.

At Luckie, the lowest-scoring pupils were tutored by Right-to-Read. What is most impressive at this school is that, while all tutored groups' pretests were considerably lower than those of the nontutored participants, in every grade except the seventh the posttest scores of the tutored pupils were considerably higher than the school as a whole. Separate posttests and gain scores for the nontutored pupils were not available for this school. The total posttest scores, then, alone would have been lower than the total grade posttest, making the difference between tutored and nontutored participants even greater than the difference reported between the tutored and total school.

At Ware, the tutored pupils were also chosen from among the top scorers on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills pretest. In every case except the seventh grade, the tutored pupils had higher pretest and posttest scores than the nontutored participants. In every grade except the sixth, the tutored pupils' gains were also higher. Also, as at Herndon, there was no significant difference between gain scores of tutored and nontutored participants.

TOTAL MEAN PRETEST/POSTTEST AND GAIN SCORES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE RIGHT-TO-READ PROGRAM ON THE READING SUBTEST OF THE IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

Groups	N=	Pre	Post	Gain
4th Grade				
Tutorial Participants	49	3.7	4.3	0.6
Total	--	3.2	3.7	0.5
5th Grade				
Tutorial Participants	55	4.2	5.2	1.0
Total	--	3.9	4.3	0.4
6th Grade				
Tutorial Participants	23	5.0	5.9	0.9
Total	--	4.5	5.0	0.5
7th Grade				
Tutorial Participants	32	5.3	6.1	0.8
Total	--	5.0	5.8	0.8

All three schools did organize and are operating reading centers. As every child in each participating school is technically a "Right-to-Read" pupil, all faculty members receive inclass and onsite inservice, and all pupils have access to center materials. Interest centers and the use of art and drama to integrate reading and language arts into all phases of curriculum were developed and are being used at all class levels. Across-school training and demonstrations are facilitated by the use of the parent tutors, who fill-in in the classrooms when the teachers are receiving instruction or taking program information to other schools.

To summarize, pupil test results show that, at all three schools, with few exceptions, the Right-to-Read tutored participants did gain a month for each month of instruction. Ware and Herndon tutored participants were chosen from high pretest scorers because Title I was providing remedial services for the low-scoring pupils. In all cases, Title I personnel provided assistance in program planning and implementation.

In addition, a comparison of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading subtest scores for fourth-grade tutored and nontutored pupils (spring, 1973) and matched fifth-grade former tutored and former nontutored pupils (fall, 1973) was made. No pupils are being R2R lab-tutored this year, all are receiving benefits from parent-tutors in the classroom, and the former tutored pupils are maintaining their significantly higher test scores.

(Source: The information above was taken from an unpublished report, "Atlanta's Right-to-Read Program, 1972-73: A Blueprint for Commitment," and the "Addendum, Fall, 1973.")

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